INTRODUCTION TO MICROBOARDS
by the Pennsylvania Health Law Project

Things to Consider if You Choose to Set Up a Microboard

What Are Microboards? They are organizations that are comprised of persons that know and care about persons with developmental disabilities. Also, they are usually very small, nonprofit corporations that function as a provider agency for the one person with a disability.

In keeping with the philosophy of Self Determination for persons with disabilities, Microboards are also referred to as Self Directed Support Corporations (SDSC).

A Microboard’s governance is typically done by a board of officers that may include the following: the person with a disability, their family and friends that can provide reliable and effective support network around the person. It is very important for the Microboard officers to believe in and value the person with a disability, understand and appreciate their needs, wants and dreams.

Microboard officers come together with a firm commitment to the principles of self determination, to the end that they employ their expertise, skills, and resources to enhance empowerment of the person with a disability. For example, these principles translate into the following:

• **Freedom** to make life decisions,
• **Authority** to receive and spend public monies, to recruit and fire paid support staff,
• **Receive** support from individuals who are **freely** chosen by them.

Through the application of Self Determination principles and the philosophy of person-centered planning a Microboard can be created into a non profit entity where a person’s wishes and needs can be addressed in a manner that is empowering, liberating and enriching.

The Benefits of a Microboard Include the Following, but are not limited to:

• They assist families and their loved ones establish a lasting entity that will have oversight over future planning and supports.

• They provide person-centered structures that are specific to the unique needs of each person’s needs, skills, wants and challenges.

• Could cut down on administrative and other costs.

• They assist persons with disabilities to plan, direct and monitor their own services and supports.

See reverse for more information.
• They are **focused on the one person** and directed by trusted people close to them.

• They are **instrumental in providing guidance to quality life outcomes** i.e. empowering a person to contribute and receive from their community.

**So, How Do We Set Up a Microboard?**

• **The structure and the composition of Microboards vary.** The first step in the right direction is to start out with close friends and family on the path popularly known as "developing a person-centered plan and a "circle of supports".

• **Develop a Mission Statement for the Microboard.**

• **Development of Bylaws** that will provide direction for the governance of the corporation.

• **Incorporation** of this non-profit entity is done usually with the help of an attorney through the Department of State. Incorporation makes a non-profit group legit so that it can act as a fiduciary entity on the behalf of the person with a disability at any given time.

• **Identify Needs and Strengths of the person.** When developing a Individual Service Plan, it is crucial to work with the person's Supports Coordinator. Individual Service Plan’s (ISP) are used for developing the $ cost associated with the services needs of a person.

• **Develop an ISP** that is **person-centered** and reflects various supports (i.e. **traditional** and **non-traditional**) /service needs of a person.

• **Develop a Budget** that is based upon a person’s service needs. Microboards can provide guidance and enhance access to identified approved services/supports needed by each person.

• **Arrange** for a meeting with your county **MH/MR** to discuss your intent to establish a Microboard.

For more information about **how to set up a Microboard**, you may contact the PA Health Law Project at 717-236-2269 or 717-236-6310 or e-mail our office staff at gegun@phlp.org (for Grace Egun) or dgates@phlp.org (for David Gates).

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